

What is Claimed is:

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[c1] A confectionery product, comprising a mixture of solid fat and at least 15% by weight of non-cereal vegetable particles which are dispersed in a continuous fat phase to form a stable, shaped vegetable-fat mixture upon setting.

[c2] The confectionery product according to claim 1, wherein the non-cereal vegetable particles comprise finely ground particles having a size of about 80 microns or less.

[c3] The confectionery product according to claim 1, wherein the non-cereal vegetable solids comprise finely ground particles having a size of about 40 microns or less.

[c4] The confectionery product according to claim 1, wherein the non-cereal vegetable solids are present in an amount ranging from about 30% to about 60% by weight of the confectionery product.

[c5] The confectionery product according to claim 4, wherein the non-cereal vegetable solids comprises at least one type of vegetable preparation selected from the group consisting of dried vegetable pieces, dried vegetable powder, vegetable paste, vegetable distillate, vegetable concentrate, and mixtures thereof.

[c6] The confectionery product according to claim 5 wherein the non-cereal vegetable solids comprises at least one type of vegetable selected from the group consisting of potatoes, beans, lentils, peas, asparagus, aubergine, basil, beet root, broccoli, Brussels sprout, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chicory, courgette, cucumber, curly kale, fennel, garlic, gherkins, gourd, leeks, lettuce, marrow, mushrooms, okra, onions, parsnip, peppers, plantain, pumpkin, quorn, radish, spinach, spring greens, swede, sweetcorn, tomato, turnip, watercress, yam, zucchini, and mixtures thereof.

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[c7] The confectionery product according to claim 1, wherein the fat is present in an amount of at least 25% by weight of the confectionery product.

[c8] The confectionery product according to claim 1, wherein the ratio of non-cereal vegetable solids to fat is between about 1:2 to about 3:1.

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[c9] The confectionery product according to claim 1, wherein the fat imparts a melt-in-the-mouth sensation upon being placed in the mouth.

[c10] The confectionery product according to claim 1, wherein the fat is selected from the group consisting of cocoa butter, cocoa butter equivalent, cocoa butter replacer, crystallizable vegetable fat, and mixtures thereof.

[c11] . The confectionery product according to claim 1, further comprising at least one cereal-based component in an amount of up to about 40% by weight of the confectionery product.

[c12] The confectionery product according to claim 11, wherein the cereal-based component is selected from the group consisting of corn, oats, wheat, barley, rye, rice, millet, malt and mixtures thereof.

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[c13] The confectionery product according to claim 1, further comprising sugar in an amount of up to about 55% by weight of the product.

[c14] The confectionery product according to claim 13, wherein the sugar is selected from the group consisting of glucose, lactose, fructose, sucrose, maltose, dextrose, polydextrose, maltodextrin, inverted sugar, a product of the enzymatic saccharification of starch, and mixtures thereof.

[c15] A confectionery product comprising:

a first portion comprising a mixture of a non-cereal vegetable component and a fat-based component; and

a second portion comprising an aerated mixture of a non-cereal vegetable component, a milk-based component, and an optional sugar component, the two portions being positioned adjacent to one another in a set configuration.

[c16] The confectionery product according to claim 15, wherein the first portion comprises at least one type of cereal-based component.

[c17] The confectionery product according to claim 15, further comprising a third portion comprising a non-cereal vegetable paste, the third portion being adjacent to the second portion.

[c18] The confectionery product according to claim 17, wherein the portions are partly covered with a fat-based layer.

[c19] The confectionery product according to claim 18, wherein the fat-based layer is a chocolate-based layer.

[c20] The confectionery product according to claim 18, wherein the shape of the product is in the form of a bar, slab, rocher, cluster, or crisp.

[c21] The confectionery product according to claim 15, wherein the product comprises a fat-based shell and a center filling comprising non-cereal vegetable solids and fat.

[c22] The confectionery product according to claim 15, wherein the product comprises a center filling and a shell each of which comprises non-cereal vegetable solids and fat.

[c23] The confectionery product according to claim 15, wherein a non-cereal vegetable-and-fat mixture is adjacent to a wafer or biscuit element.

[c24] The confectionery product according to claim 23, wherein the wafer or biscuit element has the shape of a tube, boat, or a plate.

[c25] A method for preparing a confectionery product, the method comprising:

(a) mixing melted fat and at least 15% by weight of non-cereal vegetable solids in the form of particles to form a vegetable-fat mixture;

(b) refining the vegetable-fat mixture to reduce the particle size of the non-cereal vegetable solids to obtain a refined vegetable-fat mixture; and

(c) allowing the refined fat vegetable-fat mixture to cool and set in a stable, predefined solid shape.

[c26] The method according to claim 25 wherein the particle size of the vegetable solids is reduced to about 40 microns or less in the refining stage.

[c27] The method according to claim 25, wherein the fat base is processed after refining the fat base to ensure the formation of stable fat crystals.

[c28] The method according to claim 25, wherein the fat comprises cocoa butter or vegetable fat.

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